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Leadership Competency Series

Finding the Inner Voice – 8th Habit of Leadership - II

Leadership Competency: Success is not achieved by chance but by choice. Effective leaders balance their activities, says M R Chandramowly. This is the concluding part of the two-part article

CEO: Guruji, suppose I find my inner voice, how am I sure that what I've found is the real inner voice.

Guruji: Well, did you find one already? If so, that must give you immense happiness and peace. At times people think that they have achieved greatness without getting beyond the basics - wealth and power. Discovering one's inner voice is a tenacious journey. If you are lucky, you may discover it soon by some external help and guidance.

CEO: If finding the inner voice is an individual action, why do we need external guidance?

Guru: Guidance is required. Listen to this story. A proud king, who had enjoyed fat wealth and power for long was out on a pilgrimage. He felt sudden yearning to for self-introspection to find his inner voice. He went in search of a Guru and found one holy man in the forest where he camped. The holy man was once a prince who had renounced his position and become a sage. The king came near the hut of the sage and the holy man welcomed him in. The king wanted to touch his feet. The sage took a step back and said, "Please stop, why do you wish to touch my feet." The King replied, "Guruji, I bow down to you for the great sacrifices you have made of wealth and happiness. You have renounced everything. The sage smiled, "In that case, your highness, I should bow down to you," he told the king. The king felt quite flattered. He thought that he was honoured since he had made huge donations and charities to the temple nearby. However, for the sake of modesty, he said, "Why, holy man, what have I done that makes you think that you should bow down to me?" The sage looked at him and said, "My dear king, two persons have two nice rooms. Inside the rooms there are gold and diamonds scattered amidst filth. One throws the filth off this room and retains the gold and diamonds. The other throws the gold and diamonds off his room and retains the filth. Who has made a sacrifice?" asked the sage. "The one who has thrown the gold and diamonds and has retained the filth," replied the King.

"Now, you fool, do you realise who between us has renounced? You have thrown away the wealth of true happiness hidden in yourself for the sake of filth that is your vanity, wealth and power. I have thrown away the filth to retain the true wealth and true happiness. Must you say that I have renounced? Is it not you who has renounced?" The king hobbled out of the hut speechless. (Adapted from ' Tales told by Mystics')

CEO: What a way of depiction of truth! Sir, then, how does one discover his voice? What are the steps of this journey? That was a story of past centuries. Looking straight into the situations around today, I do not see brighter chances of success, with intriguing forces from all angles of business.

Guru: Do you know the fulcrum of your life's events, success or failures? It is just one significant point. The choices you make. Success is not achieved by chance but by choice. Fundamentally, you came to this world, by choice and you have grown up to this level by choice.

You are free to choose your response to a situation, question or challenge. You may have relaxed or tense circumstances. If you keep a check on your emotions and nurse down the tense state to relaxed and reflective state, you are using your choice and using the space between stimulation and response.

CEO: Yes, I think so. Responsible leaders strike a balance in everything they do. Can such leaders change everything using right choices?

Guru: To some extent, yes. A responsible leader is one who is reponse-able. He is accountable for number of things. His success depends not only on right choices, but more on his range and orbit of noticing. Less he fails to notice, more the choices for action shaped by thoughts, and the 'Effort and Balance' is the key.

CEO: Then, how can he exercise the control mechanism of his mind, on millions of things he notices and how he regulates to focus only on useful thoughts and action?

Guru: Mind, like a drunken monkey trots from one thought to the other with unpredictable links. One must reduce this speed and cry out to slow down. You need effort and balance to experience the 'slowing down' process, When a thought begins, as a matter of choice, if a useless thought is nipped out in its bud, several thousands of links of thoughts are avoided, which would have generated based on the seed thought, thus effectively enhancing the thinking ‘time’ for useful thoughts.

It is hard to slowdown, especially when the good and bad meet face to face, creating a magnetic field of opposite forces. The ability to quickly get away from useless thoughts and to stay with meaningful thoughts is the achievement reward for using ‘Effort and Balance’. When the mind runs faster on different channels, you need a conscious effort to shift the focus to what Wordsworth calls as ‘a happy stillness of mind’.

Our intellect is the product of the impressions we have gathered so far in all our life. In all our experiences, we have been living, moment to moment, and each of that could have given a few dots and dashes on our mental sheath. Goaded by these impressions, an irresistible ‘mind’, wild and surging, drives our thoughts hither and thither. Tossed between them, we earn our agitation and feel shattered in our attempts.

An effective leader being aware of this mind game, chooses his responses, uses the four dimensions of intelligence, guided by his principles and ultimate goals of achievement.

CEO: What exactly are you referring to when you say four dimensions of intelligence?

Guru: They are intelligences of the physical, mental, emotional and social. When you cough, the body system makes use of the physical and biochemical co-ordination of seven trillion cells. The body hormonises with the function of the mind and intellect. Managing feelings and being aware of our response-impact on others is the emotional and social intelligence. All the four overlap and your effort to develop these will bring in greater power and peace.

Discovering the inner voice is a holistic process. The seed is within us and it is all there within. A seed discovers its final purpose on crossing certain stages of plant growth and a white flower comes out from the green tree.

There is a process, a system, and natural way for this journey and one has to discover that himself. It is an

individual voyage since the seat of the soul can only discover its goal.

Which person is seasoned by which experience?

Which sin is washed away by which virtue and sense?

No soul on earth can ripen without heat

No way to skip the process of agony and beat

(Dr. D.V.G's Mankuthimmana Kagga – 609)

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